10: d'Orleans--312 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 292, 793

"Luang Prabang and its suburbs have about eighty pagodas, distributed over four parishes, at the head of each being a bishop, who is to be distinguished from the other priests by a short skirt of violet-coloured silk. The ordinary priests are invariably attired in yellow, with a long skirt and with drapery thrown back over the shoulder like the Lamas of Thibet, while they all have shaved heads."

10: d'Orleans--354 [2] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 292, 492, 493, 644

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]
"Every one kneels in the dust as the monarch passes by, behind him being four bearers of parasols, two white and two green. The cortége is a lengthy one, being headed by a group of horsemen, bare legged, and with their toes resting upon the edge of very broad stirrups; their dress consisting of a small white jacket and a broad brimmed felt hat. Then comes a mandarin in a wooden palanquin, upon each side of him being a man who carries a bamboo mat to protect him from the mud which the young girls endeavour to throw at him. A troop of children who come along clapping their hands are succeeded by two broad-wheeled waggons,[sic] one of which is drawn by a horse, and the other by men, and by three elephants conveying in a howdah, made of osier to protect them from the sun, officers of a lower grade."

10: d'Orleans--354-355 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 292, 534, 644

[LSS: During the New Year celebration in Luang Prabang.]
"With the Laos soldiers, preceded by six trumpeters, comes the guard dressed in yellow tick and wearing round caps, striped blue and white. The [355] standard of Luang Prabang is white, with a particoloured dragon like that of China, while a second white flag with a red border, upon which can be traced the outlines of an elephant, must be Siamese.

The soldiers are followed by the musicians and certain instruments, such as the drums and the cymbals, are placed upon a wooden square which is suspended by ropes from the shoulders of several bearers, the player marching in the centre. Then come more soldiers, naked to the waist, sword-bearers, lance-bearers, and cane-bearers, the canes being tied up with some red material in bundles.

Last of all comes the king, seated upon a very small gilt throne with no dome to it and borne by eight men, facing the king being two children on their knees. He is wearing a small white jacket, a silken langoufi and a rather dirty old gray helmet, with an European sunshade in his hand; the rear guard is formed by young Laotians, intoxicated with tchoum-tchoum, many of them bearing upon their faces marks of the mud thrown by the young girls."

"At a mere suggestion from my companion, and as if it were a relief from a tense situation, his Majesty graciously stepped to the main doorway of the palace, an excellent jet-black background for a blazing tropical sunshine that outdid anything Hollywood can devise in lighting-effects, and posed for his photograph. Another merest hint from the commissaire and Tiao Sisavang Vong Somdet Prah went off at once like a small boy to dress up for his picture, and came back in a surprisingly short time in his most regal robes, a radiant royal costume quite beyond my power to describe. All the medals on the breast of bronze near-by were now in place on the living model; he was again in women's silk stockings, quite evidently brand new, and this time held up by round-the-leg garters of brilliant hue. A green and saffron flowered-silk sampot--but how foolish for a man who cannot even describe a ball-dress well enough to give his wife any conception of it to attempt so impossible a job as this!

Never have I found a king more docile in meeting my [311] every suggestion. Barely a whisper from me and he ordered his throne-room decked out in its coronation best, had his royal attendants summoned. Cringing flunkies brought in swords of state, big golden bowls, a marvelous hat of half cowboy half women-of-the-plume-days style, studded with jewels, and with a Burmese-pagoda top. Ascending his throne, the king assumed his most regal aspect, his white gloves flashing like those of a traffic policeman during a Catholic procession. The master of ceremonies of the palace himself

brought tables and other regal paraphernalia to offset my lack of a tripod; two men in green, each holding a great sword, knelt fearfully at the foot of the throne, and--and I muffed the picture. No doubt the nervous tension of photographing kings on their thrones in their coronation-robes would be enough to cause an even calmer and more experienced photographer to misjudge tropical light conditions; at any rate I so under-exposed that strip of film that only those with keen eyesight can make out more than the general lay-out of the throne, and the king's white-gloved hands on his richly sampotted knees.

Lesser catastrophes have left broken hearts, but it did not so much matter about that throne-room picture after all, for, again at the merest suggestion of the commissaire and as promptly as a circus seal obeys its trainer, the king once more stepped to the spotlighted doorway of the palace, hat, robes, medals, and all, to give my camera another trial, finally posing with his French boss at his side. The commissaire was also in all his glory. Three great medals that proved he had done this, that, or some other brave deed--for he was not a man to have successfully bootlicked this, that, or the other high authority--blazed over his heart. His white uniform coat and black trousers had fancy neck, waist, wrist, and trouser-seam bands; he wore a sword, [312] with rich belt-tassels, and carried white gloves, though the white casque on his head

and the black shoes on the blistering pavement had nothing unusual about them. In short his dress was as out of keeping with his plebeian name of Mill--were names translated--as it was with the simple backwoods life about us. Finally his Majesty, of his own volition unless my eyes were momentarily off their guard, was graciously moved to insist that I also stand beside him in the doorway spotlight and let the camera again do its worst. In vain did I plead my unworthiness to be thus immortalized, like one of the boon companions of his Majesty, particularly in my vagabondish incongruities of rumpled semi-whites, once-tan shoes still half decided to be black, a necktie that insisted on the right to be temperamental in a tropical climate, a pocket bulging full of--how should I know what? The king, I long afterward noticed, wore quite a different face in these pictures in true royal garb than that of the genial boulevardier he presented in mufti, something like his own elder brother, with all the cares of state upon his shoulders."

23: Franck--335 [2] T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 292 Ethnic subgroup

"...the Kha coolies were not afraid of the rain--or at least they were less afraid of it than of the prince. They slashed down banana-leaves as umbrellas and kept right on going."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AMB
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Laotian Dancers

[facing title page]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

following a crowd. It was about two miles from the town's centre 527
and I passed several pagodas on the way, where carpenters were
working by lamplight in preparation for a future festival.

An enclosure had been built round the pagoda in which every 354
kind of light, from hurricane lamps to fluorescent tubes, had been 527
concentrated in an anarchic glare. The pagoda had hired a generator 545
for the occasion. There was no entrance fee, but young ladies with
demurely lowered eyes waited just inside to accept donations, in
return for which you received a candle, a posy of Japanese lilac and
two joss-sticks in a bamboo container. Among the many attractions
was a free theatre show, lasting for many hours, indistinguishable,
except to an expert, from the theatre of Siam. Actors remained on
the stage for what seemed interminable periods, occasionally ad-
vancing or retreating a few steps. Meanwhile their babies played
happily round their feet, and quite frequently a stage-hand would
walk across and interrupt a scene for a few seconds to pump up the
pressure in the hurricane lamps.

On a nearby platform the *lap ton* was being danced. Once again 292
it was the major attraction, but as it was still incorrect for Laotian 301
girls to dance in public, religious enterprise had arranged for 535
hostesses to be brought over from Siam, just across the river. The 562
pagoda hired the girls for the three nights and lodged them in a 527
nearby building. It cost a piastre to cavort round the stage for
about fifteen minutes with one of them. They were dressed in
hideous knee-length frocks, and some seemed to have permanent
waves. The backward Laotian girls in their dowdy finery, their
silk scarves, their skirts woven at the hem and waist-band with silver
and gold thread, and their abundant jewel-decked chignons, could
only look on wistfully. As I arrived the organizers were having 403
trouble with the microphone – indispensable adjunct to any social 527
occasion in the new Far East. A young man chanted a soft, nasal
melody which could only be heard within the *boun* enclosure itself.
But suddenly the electricians were successful with their tinkerings
and all Vientiane was flooded with a great, ogrish baying. The

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

slaughterers are obliged to work by flares, which is responsible, the French think, for an unusually picturesque effect. It is 'not done' to go along while the actual killing is in progress, but shortly after, when the carcasses are suspended from hooks to be cut up, and the workers, stripped to their loincloths, and garishly splashed, paddle about in a vermilion sea. Cars are stationed just beyond the reach of the steaming odours, and one is recommended to see the thing as one views a nude in a picture gallery – that is, divorced from all but a disinterested abstraction, in this case the colour.

The possibilities of Vientiane, it was clear, would be quickly exhausted. Thao Nhouy, the Laotian Minister of Education, lent me his jeep to see some of the surrounding villages, but the roads were so appalling that it broke down after being driven for about five miles. He then suggested that I might like to see the local schoolgirls dancing, and when I said that I would be delighted, and asked for permission to take photographs, the girls were sent off home, on their bicycles, to get their best clothes. An hour or two later they began to trickle back, wearing their mothers' jewellery as well as their own and with their silk finery done up in paper parcels. When they had dressed and were ready they made a glittering sight. One girl wore a scarf ornamented with real gold thread said to be worth about £50 in English money. They danced under the supervision of a teacher whom I recognized as a professional actor, from the *boun*,[1] and who occasionally intervened when a girl failed in some minor feat, such as bending her fingers back at an expressive ninety degrees from the palm.

All these girls, dressed as they were like princesses, came from shacks in the forest. Each one had a bicycle – infallibly fitted with dynamo lighting, and sometimes 3-speed gears. It seems that a bicycle for his daughter is one of the essentials for which a Laotian will work. It is considered ill-bred and irreligious in Laos to work more than is necessary. The father of a family cultivates an amount of land, estimated, by a bonze who is expert in such matters, to be

[1] [i.e., Laotian religious festival. --Analyst]

149: Reinach-121a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

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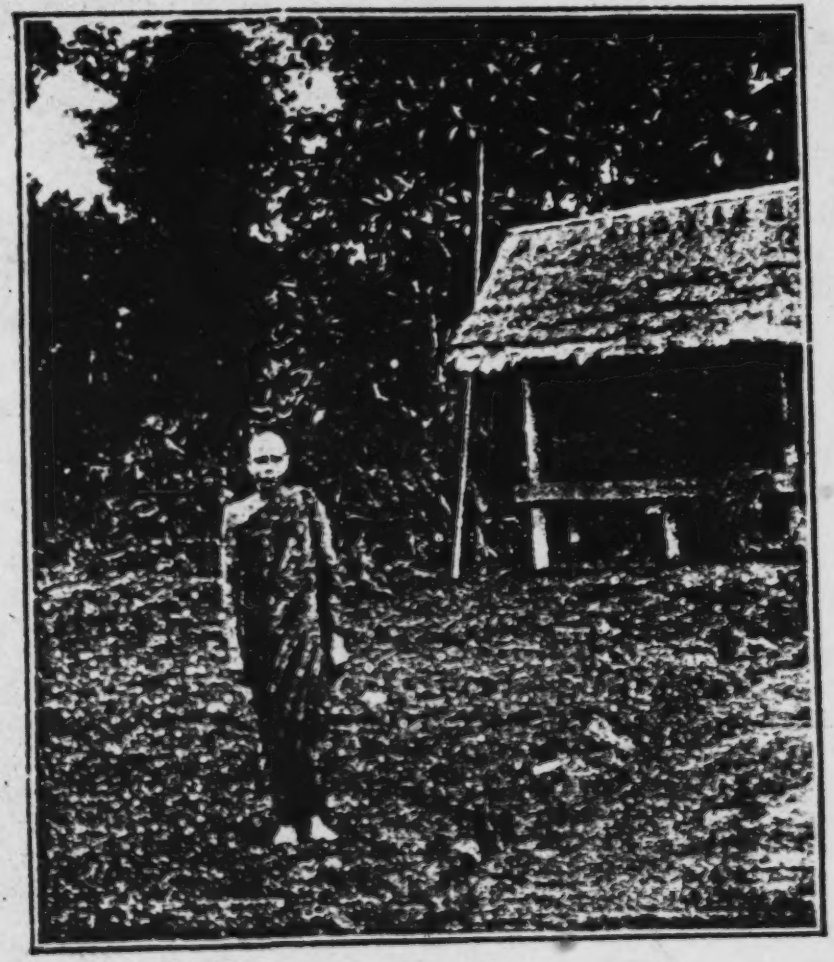

Fig. 42 /p. 161/ A young bonze.

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To dream of a woman and be awakened by the dream.

To covet the property of others.

To speak profanely of earth, wind, fire, water or anything whatsoever.

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Ordained bonzes, like novices and students, shave their heads, eyebrows and beards carefully and repeat this operation every two weeks. Their clothing, which is the same for all and is of a uniform yellow color obtained by means of a jackwood dye, consists of a sarong, a kind of very full skirt which is worn folded in pleats and extends from the waist to the ground, and which is held in at the waist by a narrow sash. A half-tunic passing under one arm is attached to the opposite shoulder, and is split on one side. The whole garment is kept in place by a sash worn crosswise, and is covered with a kind of toga in the antique manner which is severely draped.

Ordained bonzes wear in addition a piece of pleated cloth on the left shoulder on which sacred characters and various formulas are inscribed.

Bonzes obey a code which was brought to them from India together with the sacred books, and a part of which has been quoted above.

The code requires that their clothing should not be made of one piece of cloth which is whole and of full width, but that it be made of unmatched pieces sewn together. Since the code does not in any way specify the nature of the cloth, one sees bonzes' garments [164] of silk and velvet as well as of cotton and flannel, depending on the generosity of the donors.

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Failure to keep the vow of chastity is very severely punished. The guilty person is marched through the village or city and seated backwards on a horse or carried on a wattle while a minor functionary proclaims the fault committed aloud and beats on a gong. Children and even adults utter hoots and throw filth at the guilty party and his female accomplice, who follows a few steps behind him. When he gets back to the pagoda the bonze is degraded from his rank and then handed over to the civil authorities if there are any grounds for so doing (1).

[10]
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(1) This custom has fallen into disuse. Faults committed by bonzes are treated much more indulgently in Laos than in Cambodia.

291 or less degree lightens its rather dark color. The skirt is a true cylinder, with the same diameter all along its length. A woman raises the skirt in a mass like a crown above her head, lets it slide down along her body and fastens it to her waist, without any hooks or fasteners, by tucking it in along her stomach, which is largely left bare. A brightly colored sash of cotton or silk is thrown over one shoulder, sometimes covering the breasts, to complete the costume.

"During the cold season, where there is a winter, a few women cover their trunks with a short jacket. This garment finds favor mainly outside the larger centers.

302 "A certain number of women wear their hair cut in Bressant style, in accordance with the style imported by the Siamese. The greater number wear their long hair rolled into a coil on the top or side of the head. Women's coiffures vary, moreover, depending on the region and on whether they are married or single.

292 "For great ceremonies, wealthy women wear skirts made of cloth spangled with gold or silver, and sashes of the same type.

"In Luang-Prabang they add a silk or velvet jacket decorated with embroidery on the neck, front and cuffs. Merchants can be found in this city who rent out costumes of this type, as well as gold jewelry, for great ceremonies to women who do not have any." (Le Laos français.)

301 Jewelry. Jewels find great favor among the [179] Laotians and
556 are used to complete and enrich their costume. They are not only ornaments, but also the most widespread method for realizing and preserving the liquid part of their fortune. In fact, the inhabitants transform the greater part of [Illustration here] their savings and profits into jewelry, and since they wear them on their body they are spared the use of strongboxes.

[583] The women and children are the ones who wear jewels most. They go into the trousseau of the young bride, and parents give them to their children as the latter grow up, thus putting together a sort of dowry for the time when they reach the age of marriage.

301 [180] Gold and silver are used in making jewelry, and precious
306 stones such as rubies, sapphires and various genuine or imitation gems are sometimes added as ornaments.

Gold is not used in all parts of Laos, but is mainly limited to the large centers located near regularly worked gold-bearing deposits.

[563] Doubtless because of the application of ancient sumptuary laws, silver is the only metal used by certain races--even by the Khas,

149: Reinach--135a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 45 /p. 179/ Laotian princesses and their children, in Luang-Prabang

149: Reinach--156 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Ever since the death, singers and improvisers of both sexes accompanied by volunteer musicians had recounted the merits, qualities and exploits of the deceased at great length and with emphasis before a numerous audience which remained attentive and never grew tired. They boasted of his good deeds, listed his particular habits and tastes and enumerated his many children and grandchildren.

They dwelled with great satisfaction on the intimacies which he had taken with the fair sex up to quite an advanced age, and in support of their remarks showed brightly illuminated drawings painted on long streamers of glazed calico. These drawings, as much by the truth of the attitudes shown as by their outrageous realism, were the joy of the spectators. Both children and adults roared with laughter as they listened to the highly spicy commentary of the improvisers.

A curious fact was that this exhibition did not occasion any obscene or even suggestive gesture on the part of the audience.

[532]
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The bonzes, who are the only art students in this country, are the ones who color these pictures. If published in our own land, the latter would certainly call down all the rigor of the law on their author.

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The day of cremation finally came, and the funeral proper began.

One of the sons of the deceased first set free two pairs of partridges and turtledoves, pet birds which he had had. The poor creatures were unaccustomed to flight and refused to leave their cage, but then beat their wings and clumsily escaped to a perch a few meters above ground on one of the trees [207] in the garden.

[175]

A trail of ashes was spread all around the fence surrounding the house of the deceased in order, as popular belief has it, to prevent his spirit from escaping into the nearby region and tormenting the living.

A solid bamboo stretcher which twelve hardy men would carry on their shoulders was placed on the ground to await the catafalque. Attendance was heavy, and people of all ages came from a distance.

[292]

They wore their holiday clothes with vivid, light and iridescent colors. They wore flowers in their ears and hair and carried multicolored streamers, wax candles and sticks of incense in their hands.

The members of the family, the officials of the Muong and the bonzes were also there in force.

The catafalque was carried from the house by hand and put down on the stretcher, which the porters then raised to their shoulders. At its base, near the feet of the deceased, was fastened a strip of calico

Tyibal Tai
Kha

291 The men's costume is like that of the Laotians. A few, however, have adopted the Burmese costume, turban and all, in which case they let their hair grow and roll it in a coil instead of having a brush cut.

The women wear a very long skirt with broad stripes running across it which is fastened beneath the breasts. The bust is covered by a closed jacket or bodice which is cut straight and made of cotton or silk [302] of varied colors. Their hair is rolled in a coil on the nape of the neck [301] or is held in place around the head by a narrow band of cloth and allowed to fall freely down the back. Both sexes wear metal cylinders in their ears, like the Lus, and silver jewelry.

[142] The Youns are more robust than their fellows, and also more industrious. The women are perhaps less pretty than the Laotian women, but they are just as friendly and merry.

276 [251] Both men and women chew betel, and also "Mieng" (green tea, fermented and salted). They smoke tobacco in enormous cigarettes rolled in dried banana leaves. [Illustration alongside text here]

The Youns are primarily farmers and livestock breeders. They excel in breeding and training oxen as draft animals.

212 We have seen that the Youns, although they speak the same lan-
292 guage as the Laotians, have their own form of writing which is generally used for religious writings. Their bonzes, who are highly learned for the most part, are renowned for their expert knowledge of the rites of the Buddhist religion.

101 Marriage, divorce, polygamy, births, funerals, celebrations and festivities are all the same among the Youns as among the Laotians, except for a few minor differences in detail which we need not mention here.

THE KHAS

619 Before entering into detail about the mores and customs of the
181 main Kha families, we shall again have recourse to the learned work by the Superior Resident in Laos in order to give a general sketch of this race which represents at least a third of the population.

[252] "They are to be found throughout the territory, and are divided into more than sixty families. As much as those who inhabit northern Laos are docile, manageable and respectful, so are those who inhabit the southern part of Laos proud, independent and warlike, particularly the tribes inhabiting the mountains which separate us from Annam.

149: Reinach--185a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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Fig. 68 /p. 255/ Typical Kha dancers, at Muong-Son.
(Courtesy of M. Besson.)

149: Reinach--197a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

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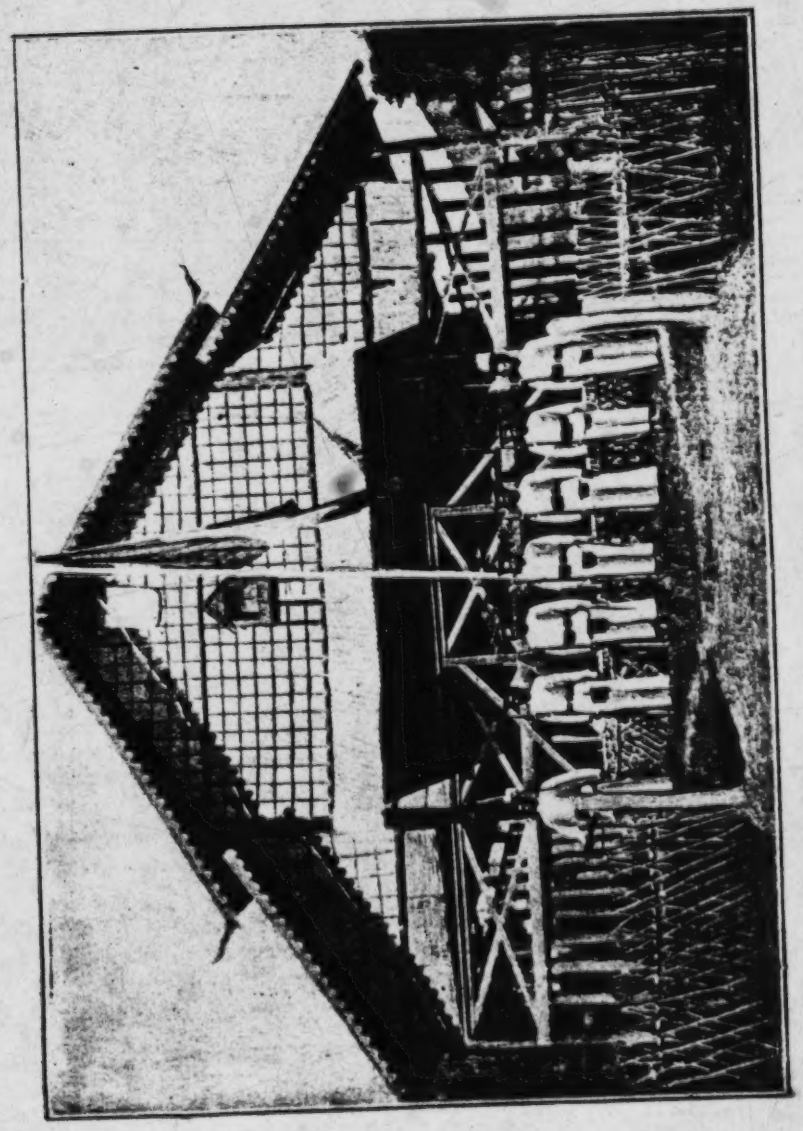

Fig. 75 /p. 279/ Barrack of the militia at Khong.

149: Reinach--384a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

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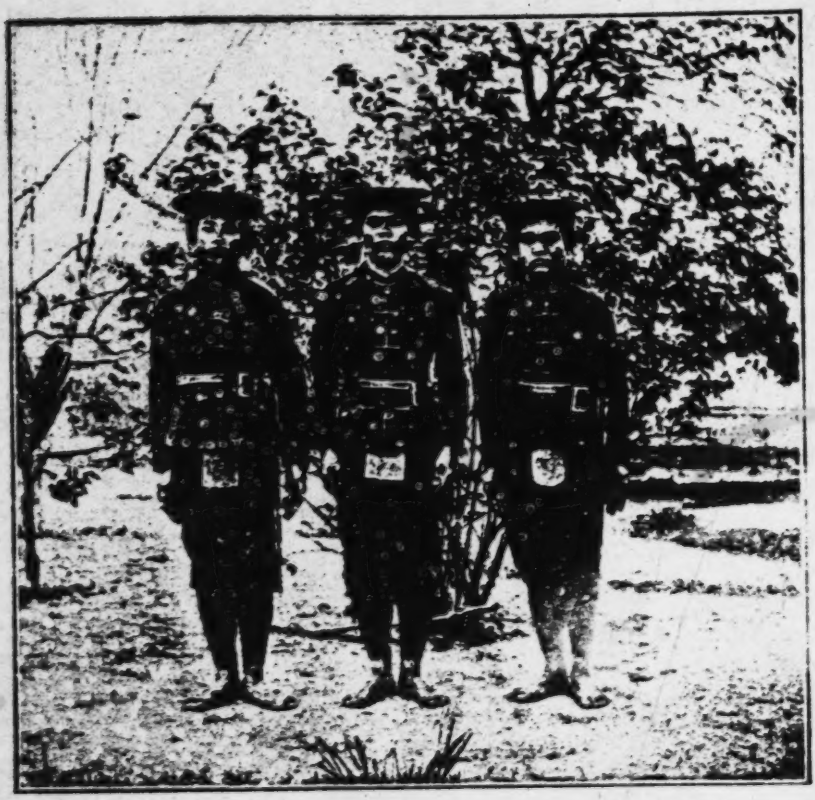

Fig. 120 /p. 507/ Militiamen at Muong-Son. (Courtesy of M. Besson

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The Laotian Bonze--The Monastic Rules.

As in Ceylon, Cambodia and the other Buddhist countries, the Laotian who enters religious life does not make a perpetual vow. To become a bonze, all that is necessary is to be twenty years old, not to have killed, nor stolen, nor have any skin disease. When he is ordained, the young man agrees to observe the Buddhist rules which are: not to take life, not to steal, not to sin against virtue, not to lie, not to drink intoxicating liquors, not to eat outside of the prescribed hours, not to attend entertainments which excite the senses, not to touch gold, nor silver, etc.

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The bonze's head, chin and eyebrows are completely shaved. In principle he must shave twice a month. The garments of the bonze must not be made of one piece and their color must be yellow ochre or yellow. These two traditions have their origin in the history of the life of the Buddha. When he left the palace of his father, the Buddha cut his hair and exchanged his princely garments for those of a hunter. Now, the hunter was a poor man dressed in rags covered with the yellow ochre dust of the fields. Therefore, since that day, in memory of the first religious garments of the Buddha, tradition demands that all bonzes wear this costome. Texts are not agreed as [795] to the color, the Saddharma-smrtyupasthana sutra giving a whole list of colors for the dyeing of religious garments. We will not delay over the discussions which have arisen amongst the various Buddhist schools over [25] this problem. We will limit ourselves to stating that in central Asia and in Tibet the bonzes wear brownish-red garments instead of the beautiful yellow color of the Laotian and Cambodian togas.

Bonzes get up very early in the morning. Having made their toilet and said their prayers, they leave about seven o'clock in single file to beg for their food. To be precise, we should add that the containers for the alms are usually carried by student bonzes [bonzillons]. After returning to the pagoda they have a brief meal, then they teach [871] the student bonzes [bonzillons] to read and write, while others perform the manual tasks necessary to the upkeep of the monastery. About noon, the bonze has another meal which is the last of the day. He does not eat any food till the following morning. After the meal he [264] must wash his fingers (he eats only with his right hand), and rinse out his mouth. Then he has a siesta, and at the close of the afternoon he works at his tasks as in the morning. In principle he must never go out alone; he is always accompanied by a brother monk to protect him from any temptation.

226 village. At the foot of the tree which is supposed to contain the
[182] dwelling of the genie, there is an altar about two meters high. Here,
the Chao Muong, surrounded by all the fishermen, places five roasted
chickens, two bottles of [73] rice alcohol, six coconuts, some betel
527 leaves, some areca nuts, some cakes, some small sticks of incense,
some beeswax candles. These he offers to the genie, asking him to
intervene in his favor so that the fishing this year be fruitful.

787 The genie is addressed by the intermediary of one of the village
527 sorceresses. As soon as she is "possessed" by the genie, she goes into
226 a trance. She is then unconscious of what is happening around her
and the genie answers through her mouth to the questions asked of her
by the fishermen. Invariably the genie's answer is the same: the
catch will be fruitful if traditions peculiar to the fishing of the pa beuk
are followed. The possessed woman, surrounded by a circle of fisher-
men, is at first standing up and is holding a cup in which are flowers,
[242] small sticks of incense, and ten beeswax candles. Her hands begin to
tremble when the genie enters into her; she then sets the cup down at
her feet, and, on top of her own clothes, puts on those of the fishermen
who present her with them on a tray for the sacrifice: an ordinary
sin, a cotton shirt dyed red, a belt and a turban also of cotton dyed
red to which are added a metallic piaster, and two yards [brasse]
of white cotton cloth for her personal use. After turning all around,
she squats down, her bust moving in a gyrating motion, and from
this moment she speaks in the name of the genie.

On the 10th day of the crescent moon the Chao Muong and the
preachers arrive at Kao Lieu, "the nine windings" of the Mekong
where there is a very famous genie who is much more powerful than
that of Ban Si Khay. Forming a large procession, they fetch the
village sorceress with parasols, lances, swords and gongs. Piled high
on an offering tray are nine bars of silver, two kilograms of beeswax,
ten candles, four coconuts, some betel leaves, some areca nuts,
[74] a metal piaster, two yards [brasse] of white cloth, a raw hen's
egg, a bottle of rice alcohol. The procession returns with the sorcer-
ess to the front of the altars which are regular houses, and everyone
settles down in them. The entrance is to the west, that is, opposite
[182] the town. The offerings for the genie are four times greater than at
Ban Si Khay as each altar receives nine roast chickens, nine bars of
silver, four coconuts, some areca, some betel, candles, small
sticks of incense. In addition, every three years, a buffalo is sacri-
ficed, and in the years between, a pig. There are the same questions
and the same answers as at Ban Si Khay.